



SOUTHEAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CLUSTER MYTHS DEBUNKED

Myths and Concerns About Enrichment Clusters

Myth #1: I have to be a teacher to facilitate a cluster.

Myth Debunked: This is definitely NOT TRUE! Some of our highest student-rated clusters come from outside presenters who share something that our staff hasn't already shared before. **You** are our source for authentic learning in your field or area of interest.

Myth #2: Four one-hour+ blocks would be extremely hard to fill with my hobby or interest.

Myth Debunked: You would be surprised how fast an hour goes by. If kids are asking questions and actively involved, you will find that one small topic could go two hours! Once you introduce your area of interest, you and the students decide together what you want to explore for each of the sessions. In addition, staff members can help you determine how to plan each session while allowing for student input.

Myth #3: I don't know how to handle students with behavior problems.

Myth Debunked: Enrichment clusters tend to be active and hands-on and students choose their favorite so behavior problems are not common since our students are so engaged in a topic that they love. Also, there will always be a Southeast staff member assigned to your cluster. This staff member deals with students daily and can assist with any issues that pop up during your cluster.

Myth #4: I don't do well presenting and facilitating by myself.

Myth Debunked: Bring along a friend who can help. We can also pair you up with a Southeast staff member who may be able to assist you during the course of our cluster. Remember that enrichment cluster groups are usually small groups. You don't need to stand in the front and talk during enrichment clusters, give a quick overview and then dive right in and start working on a project together.

Myth #5: You wouldn't want me because I have never done anything like this before. I have never been trained to do this type of thing.

Myth Debunked: Again, some of our highest student-rated clusters are from people outside of our building! We are looking for your insight and point of view. Students are always excited to meet someone who shares their interests.

Myth #6: I don't have anything to share, so I can't contribute to cluster facilitation.

Myth Debunked: Even if you don't have anything you would like to share, you can tap your network of friends, family members, and co-workers to present a cluster at our school. Sometimes outside community members don't want to present on their own, especially if they don't have a direct connection to our school community. **YOU** can be that connection. There are other ways to help out, too. You can greet presenters, collect materials, take photographs, help students find their rooms. Contact Susan Irvine for more information (susan.irvine@mansfieldct.org).

Myth #7: My employer will not let me off work to participate.

Myth Debunked: Many employers will provide free time-off (including the State of Connecticut) for community service activities. Check with your employer to see if you can take advantage of this opportunity. We can provide a letter stating that you are assisting our school with enrichment opportunities.

Myth #8: My child won't be able to help me.

Myth Debunked: We can place your child into your cluster if you have discussed it with him or her and let us know.

Myth #9: I would like to facilitate a cluster outside, but if it rains it will be cancelled.

Myth Debunked: We don't cancel enrichment clusters due to weather. We always make a back-up plan for outdoor clusters which may include sharing the gym or another large room or having an indoor plan that doesn't require a large space.